

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIBREV 00464 031503Z

65-61

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0464

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, ILO, OAU, XA

SUBJ: AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE

DEPAT PASS OTHER OAU CAPITALS AS APPROPRIATE

REF: LIBREVILLE 0431; STATE 073279

1. SUMMARY: OAU LABOR MINISTERS RECOMMENDED INCORPORATION OF THEIR CONFERENCE WITHIN ORGANIC STRUCTURE OF OAU; BEGAN WORK ON AN AFRICAN LABOR CHARTER; CONDEMNED MISTREATMENT OF AFRICAN EMMIGRANT LABOR IN EUROPE; ISSUED SOMEWHAT WEAK STATEMENT ON MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS; AND CONTINUED EARLIER WORK ON REDUCTION OF PROFESSIONAL RISKS TO WORKERS. QUESTION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE OAU AND ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION WITHOUT APPARENT AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. OAU LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE HELD FINAL SESSION IN LIBREVILLE MARCH 29. GABONESE VP MEBIAME CONGRATULATED
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PAGE 02 LIBREV 00464 031503Z

DELEGATES ON THEIR WORK DURING THE CONFERENCE AND

PARTICULARLY FOR PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE PROPOSED ILO WORLD LABOR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA IN 1976. IVORY COAST MINISTER OF LABOR, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF HIS ASSEMBLED COLLEAGUES, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR GABONESE HOSPITALITY.

3. OTHER THAN OPENING AND CLOSING SESSIONS, WORKING SESSIONS WERE CLOSED AND WE HAVE ONLY SKETCHY REPORTS CARRIED IN LOCAL PRESS AND FROM NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR. FOLLOWING DRAFT RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED (FULL TEXTS AS CARRIED IN GABON MATIN BEING POUCHED STATE AND LABOR):

A) RELATIONS BETWEEN AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE AND THE OAU - CONFERENCE RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS OF OAU CHARTER TO PERMIT THE INCORPORATION OF THE CONFERENCE AMONG THE ORGANIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE OAU WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ARTICLE VII OF THE OAU CHARTER.

B) AFRICAN LABOR ORGANIZATION - IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN BOTH INDIVIDUAL AFRICAN LABOR UNIONS AND INTER-UNION COOPERATION, CONFERENCE APPOINTED SEVEN MINISTERS OF LABOR TO DRAW UP AN AFRICAN LABOR CHARTER TO BE SUBMITTED EVENTUALLY TO OAU CHIEFS OF STATE CONFERENCE.

C) AFRICAN EMMIGRANT LABOR - AFTER CONDEMNING CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH AFRICAN EMMIGRANT LABORERS LIVE IN EUROPE PARTICULARLY THE "WAVES OF VIOLENCE AND CRIMINAL AND RACIST ACTS OF AGGRESSION" AGAINST THEM, CONFERENCE DEMANDED AUTHORITIES IN HOST COUNTRIES ASSURE SAFETY OF AFRICAN WORKERS AND GUARANTEE THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RIGHTS.

D) MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES - AFTER BRIEFLY TRACING HISTORY OF OAU CONCERN WITH PROBLEM OF MULTINATIONALS AND PRODUCING COUNTRIES' PARALLEL EFFORTS TO DEFEND THEIR INTERESTS THROUGH OPEC AND SIMILAR ASSOCIATIONS FOR BAUXITE AND COPPER, CONFERENCE NOTED THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAD ALSO FOUND IT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE TO DEVELOP JOINT OR MULTINATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN CIVIL AVIATION AND MARITIME AREAS.

E) PROFESSIONAL RISKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION - CONFERENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LIBREV 00464 031503Z

ENCE SALUTED THE ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT FOR HOLDING THE FIRST AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON THE PREVENTION OF PROFESSIONAL RISKS, ADOPTED THE REPORT AND ANNEXED DOCUMENTS OF THE ALGERIAN CONFERENCE, AND VOTED TO ORGANIZE THE NOVEMBER 1977 A SECOND CONFERENCE WITH THE THEME "THE PREVENTION OF PROFESSIONAL RISKS IN MINES".

4. OTHER THAN RATHER STRAIGHTFORWARD RESOLUTIONS DEALING

WITH ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS, WORKER SAFETY, AND STATUS OF AFRICANS IN EUROPE, CONFERENCE DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED A GREAT DEAL. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN ASKED ABOUT RATHER HAZY RESOLUTION ON MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES, NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR SHRUGGED AND SAID DELEGATES HAD SIMPLY NOT DONE THEIR HOMEWORK AND PRODUCTIVE DEBATE COULD NOT BE CONDUCTED.

5. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT CONFERNECE ADOPTED "PRINCIPLE OF INTER-AFRICAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION" AND AGREED TO THE CREATION OF A FUND FOR SUCH COOPERATION. PRINCIPLE AND AGREEMENT WERE NOT HOWEVER EMBODIED IN RESOLUTIONS MADE PUBLIC (PARA 3 ABOVE) POSSIBLY BECAUSE THEY MUST FIRST BE SUBMITTED TO THE NEXT OAU CHIEFS OF STATE CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR KAMPALA.

6. ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING DISCUSSIONS OF CONFERENCE CONCERNED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE OAU AND THE ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION. REPORTS REACHING US HAVE BEEN FRAGMENTARY AND CONFLICTING. BEST WE CAN DETERMINE IS THAT LIBERIAN DELEGATE OPPOSED FORMALIZING RELATIONS ON PROCEDURAL GROUNDS WHILE MALIAN DELEGATE CLAIMED CONAKRY CONFERENCE OF OAU LABOR MINISTERS HAD ALREADY VOTED FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN AFRICANS AND ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION. IN ANY EVENT, NO PUBLIC RESOLUTION ISSUED ON THIS SUBJECT.COUNTRYMAN

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